

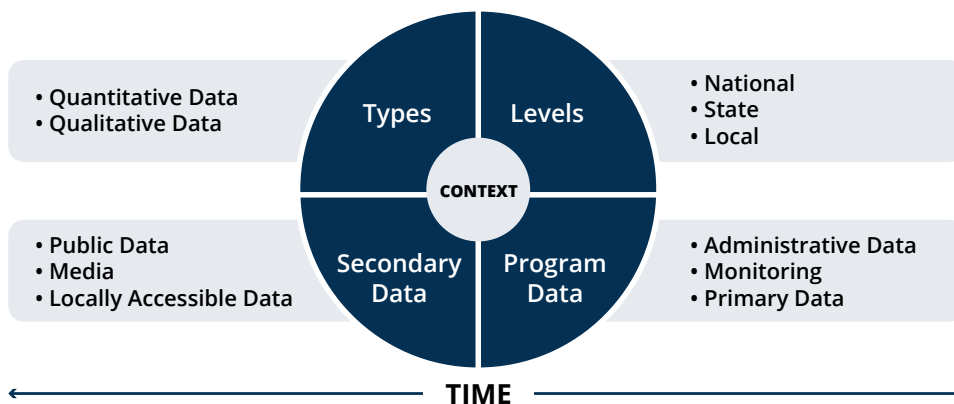
Evaluation Data Sources

This tip sheet will help you complete the Evaluation Design section of the Evaluation Plan and implement step 4 of the evaluation process.

Data Sources

A data source is an entity that provides information that has been systematically collected. Some examples include administrative records, surveillance systems, or surveys.

There are many types and sources of data. One isn't necessarily better than the other, and you can pick and choose indicators, data, and trends that are most relevant for your program and evaluation questions. The table on page three provides a format for brainstorming different data sources that may be appropriate for your evaluation.



Using mixed methods and multiple data sources can strengthen an evaluation and provide a more holistic, complete view of your findings. This is also referred to as the triangulation of data. It will help you explore the “why” behind the “what.” For example, triangulation of data can:

- be used sequentially (one after another) or concurrently (at the same point in time) for different purposes
- demonstrate the linkages of results/outcomes and your prevention efforts
- corroborate and clarify for a more valid and credible understanding especially when you have mixed results
- help you make comparisons and identify trends

Program Data

You may already be collecting monitoring data and administrative data that can be used to understand the implementation.

Examples of existing program data:

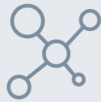
- Program reports
- Recruitment information
- Attendance logs
- Performance monitoring
- Meeting minutes

Qualitative and Quantitative Data

Qualitative data will help you understand the why and how, beyond quantifying what and how many. Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data will help you have a more complete story.

Qualitative Data

- Describes qualities or characteristics
- Narrative form
- Answers how and why
- Data collection methods:
 - Interviews
 - Open-ended survey items
 - Focus groups
 - Direct observation
 - Written documents
 - Photos



Quantitative data

- Continuous or discrete values or compared on a numeric scale
- Answers what and how many
- Data collection methods:
 - Closed-ended survey item
 - Items in interviews or questionnaires that collect numbers or are closed-ended questions
 - Counts
 - Validated scales
 - Objective measures (e.g., height, totals)



Secondary Data

It is important to first consider existing data sources and secondary data (data collected by someone else) before deciding to collect primary data (data you collect yourself). Using secondary data can save resources, time, and effort. It may also assist in assessing trends for community or longer-term outcomes.

Publicly available data are already collected, analyzed, and ready for use. Since these data do not require primary collection and are ready for use, they are more feasible to track, report, and use for evaluation purposes. For information about a variety of risk and protective factors that are available using publicly available data, visit the **SV Indicators Database** (<https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/sexual-violence-indicators-guide-database/home>).

Another secondary data source is **locally accessible data**, which is attainable through data use agreements (DUA) or memorandums of understanding (MOU).

Examples of publicly available data

- Current Population Survey and other U.S. Census files
- Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)
- Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)
- Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS)
- Cancer registries
- State vital statistics
- National Health Interview Survey (NHIS)

Examples of locally accessible data

- Law enforcement data
- Hospital data
- School data
- Legal data

Levels of Data

Examining different levels of data can help you assess patterns, comparisons, and trends that may reveal additional insights otherwise not seen when only examining combined or summed data. Examples include multiple site, local vs. state, or by population type.

Indicators

An **indicator** is a documentable or measurable piece of information (e.g., conditions, outcomes, or results) from a data source, regarding some aspect of the program/strategy being evaluated. Indicators can help operationalize your outcomes and process.

Indicators can help us tell:

- the extent to which program objectives are met
- the progress the program has made
- the extent to which targets are met
- whether a change has occurred

For information about the process of identifying and selecting indicators, visit the **SV Indicators Guide** (<https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/sexual-violence-indicators-guide-database/home>).

Use a Set of Indicators

One indicator will likely NOT fully answer an evaluation question or tell your whole story. You will need a set of indicators of what you are trying to measure that is changing. Each indicator has strengths and weaknesses; by using a set of indicators, you combine their strengths to balance out their limitations. An indicator is just one piece of the program, the evaluation, and telling the story of change and your work. Consider the following when selecting appropriate indicators:

- The indicator should correspond to your program activities (process) or outcomes.
- There may be more than one indicator for each activity or outcome.
- The indicator must measure one aspect of the activity or outcome.
- The indicator must be clear and specific to what it measures (e.g., it is not ambiguous or not able to be misconstrued).
- The indicator must be feasible to measure or track.
- The data for an indicator must be available at a timepoint or frequency that is appropriate, meaningful, and relevant to your program's current point in its lifecycle.
- The indicator is considered culturally appropriate, relevant, and ethical to your stakeholders.

For a set of worksheets that will help you select and prioritize a set of indicators for your evaluation, view the **Indicator Selection Tools** (<https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/violence-prevention-practice/sites/vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/violence-prevention-practice/files/indicator-selection-tool-508.pdf>).



On the following page, there is a worksheet to help you identify data sources. To fill out this PDF, you can type directly into the text fields using a PDF editor or print a copy to complete by hand.

Identifying Data Sources

Potential Data Source	Potential Indicators from this data source...	Will potentially answer this evaluation question:



Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention
National Center for Injury
Prevention and Control

Evalu**ACTION**

